

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Information to help you seek justice

Library mission

The mission of the Clark County Law Library is to provide knowledgeable, helpful assistance to anyone seeking legal information.

About the Library

The Clark County Law Library was created by RCW 27.24. The Library is a unique entity, created by state statute but located in the county. It is governed by a five-member board of trustees, and the bulk of its revenue comes from its statutory share of filing fees. Use of the Law Library is free for the public during the Library's open hours.

Clark County Courthouse,
first floor
1200 Franklin Street
Vancouver, WA 98660

564.397.2268

lawlibrary@clark.wa.gov

www.clark.wa.gov/law-library



Clark County Law Library Annual Report 2020

The Clark County Law Library Board of Trustees presents this 2020 Annual Report, as required by RCW 27.24. This report is based on information supplied by Maria Sosnowski, Law Librarian, and covers the period from January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.

Comments are welcome. Please feel free to contact Law Librarian Maria Sosnowski, or board members Rachel Brooks and Meridee Pabst (Co-Chairs), Judges David Gregerson and Emily Sheldrick, and Councilor Eileen Quiring O'Brien.



In their own words

"Thank you so much for your assistance. Often, public agencies and their employees are recognized only when they err or fail to deliver. Please share my heartfelt appreciation for your work." – K.F.

"Awesome. Thanks for the information. Very helpful." – K.H.

"Great-thanks so much for the information-really appreciate it!" – A.N.

"Thank you very much! Very helpful." – L.H.

"Thank you very much! It's very helpful!" – K.S.

"Thank you so much for you(r) very swift & complete reply. I'll follow up with your suggestions. You have been very helpful & kind." – K.K.

"Awesome, thank you very much Maria! I knew you would come through for me." – B.G.

Library Response to COVID-19

2020 presented a number of unique challenges to the Library as it dealt with the effects of the pandemic. The Library physically closed to the public on March 16, 2020, expecting to reopen in weeks. Instead, it remained closed for the rest of the year. During the physical closure, staff helped patrons remotely via phone and email.

Staff took advantage of the closure and used the time to complete many projects that improved service to the public. These projects included:

- Rewriting, reorganizing, updating, and expanding the website content. The new site has more information that is easier to locate, a cleaner visual presence, and an FAQ page that covers many often-asked legal questions. Staff also created a new *COVID-19 legal self-help* page to direct patrons to some reliable and relevant sources of information and assistance.
- Updating, expanding, and scanning all of the material in the ready-reference collection (aka the "goody box"). This collection covers popular legal topics, or topics about which materials are difficult to find. Scanning the information allowed it to be emailed to patrons in response to a reference question.
- Working with the current vendor to create a new online system for patrons to purchase Library self-help form kits. This will be a more secure and convenient system since it allows patrons to enter their information directly without staff intervention at any time including nights and weekends. This project will be completed in early 2021.
- Rewriting, reorganizing, and updating the *Library information brochure* and the *Self-help form kits brochure* and creating a new bookmark-sized handout about the Library. This small handout was distributed to courthouse staff to make it easier for them to give patrons the Library's contact information.

Staff Training

Combatting Hate, Racism, and Antisemitism in 2020: How Can You be Part of the Solution?

Conflict Resolution

Data Science Fundamentals

Diversity: Improving Equity & Inclusion

Introduction to Anti-Harassment and Anti-Stalking Protection Orders

Whole Person Librarianship

COVID-19: Stress Reduction for Essential Personnel

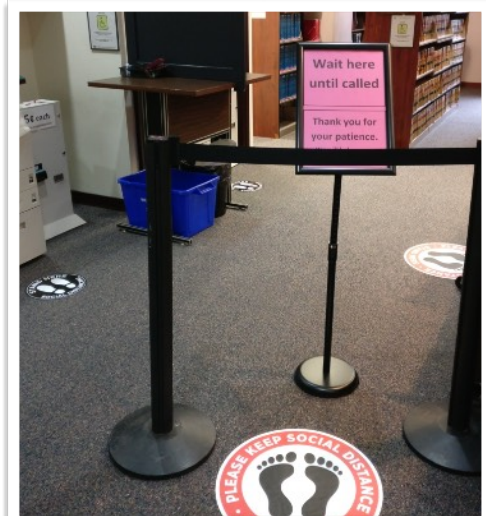
New Resources and Services

Self-help kits - *Probate With Will* and *Starting a Lawsuit in Superior Court* (both adapted from the King County Law Library). Due to changes in the law, the *Eviction* kit was divided into two kits – a 20-day notice process and a 14-day notice process. Separating the kits allowed for the 20-day kit to be sold during the pandemic.

Databases - The Library participated in a successful trial for *NOLO*, a database with self-help legal materials. As a result, a contract for remote access will be signed for 2021.

In response to requests, staff began scanning and emailing sections or chapters of Law Library books as permitted by copyright. Only general information is sent.

- Sending information about the Library's remote services to the judicial assistants so they could share it with citizens as needed.
- Contacting members of the Clark County Bar Association through their monthly newsletter, *Hearsay*. Five pieces about available remote services were published in 2020. A series of articles about *Westlaw* tips will be published monthly in 2021 to complement the remote access to *Westlaw* that the Library provides.
- Collaborating with the County's public relations personnel to publish and distribute several press releases about the Library's remote services and new self-help kits. One of the releases resulted in an interview with FM News KXL101.
- Rewriting, reorganizing, and updating the Library's *Procedure Manual*. The new version is more than twice as long as the previous version. It is more functional and includes more detailed instructions for many processes and procedures.
- Changing the Library's physical layout in preparation for reopening. The changes included: adding directional arrows in popular rows, adding a divider that separates the two copiers and the table they share, labeling the counter computer for staff-use-only since its location does not allow for the required distancing, creating a single point-of-entry to control traffic flow, placing a movable clear plexiglass partition on the counter between patrons and staff, and adding "stand here" floor markers to maintain separation.





Cost Reductions

A new print materials contract was negotiated with Thomson Reuters. 20 titles were cut which reduced the cost of the contract to 34% of the previous total. The previous contract was ended early which resulted in additional savings.

A new *Westlaw* contract was negotiated cutting the number of 'seats' from two to one. This reduced the cost of the contract to 47% of the previous total. Maintaining one seat provides patrons with the ability to access the database from the library's website. The previous contract was ended early which resulted in additional cost savings.

Another one-year contract for *Lexis-Nexis* was signed allowing patrons to access the database from the library's website.

All print titles from West Academic were cut including all from the Nutshell series.

Three print titles from Lexis were cancelled.

The Law Librarian worked fewer hours than her normal schedule.

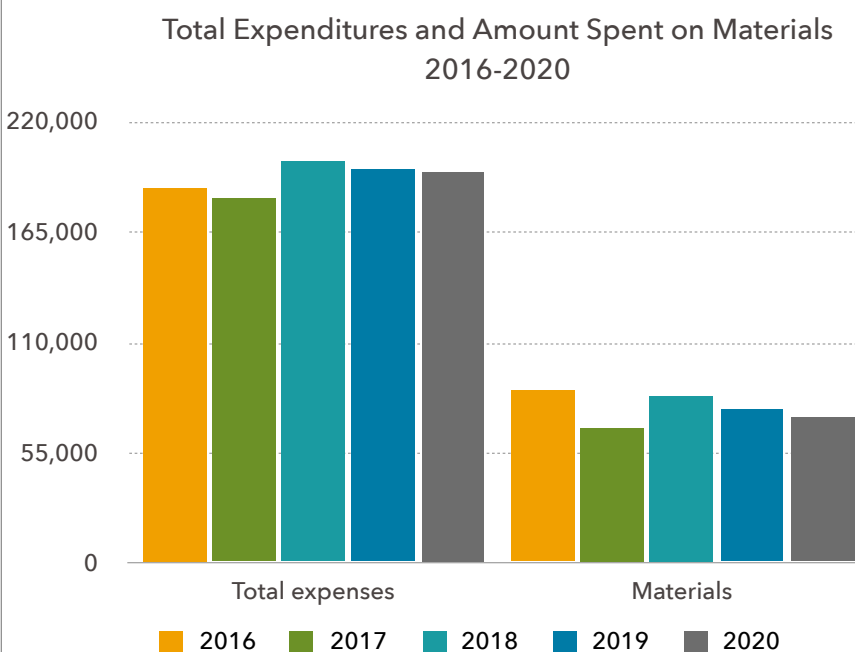
Print and Electronic Materials

The Library maintains an extensive print collection of Washington materials including continuing legal education books, Washington State Bar Association Deskbooks, *Washington Practice*, *Lexis Practice Guides*, and other treatises specific to the state. Staff also purchase other treatises and practice manuals.

Electronic materials include both *WestlawNext* with cases and statutes for all states and federal circuits, an extensive Washington database, and some secondary materials; and *Lexis Advance for Washington* that includes Shepards while also offering a basic Washington subscription.

NOLO, a self-help legal database, was also put on a remote-access trial at the end of the year. See the "New Resources and Services" section for details.

This year 37% of Library expenditures were on materials, both electronic and print. The following chart shows the relationship between the amount spent on materials and the Library's total expenditures. The cost savings from the changes made during 2020 won't really be visible until 2021.



Use of the Library

Door Count – Annual statistics for this year are not available because the Library closed in mid-March. The count was 2,532 people in the first two months of the year, including 2,274 during open hours and 258 during closed hours. (Attorneys with keycards can enter during closed hours).

Circulation – Non-reserve books may be checked out on the honor system by judges, lawyers, and county officials. During the first two months of 2020, 38 items were checked out. There were no interlibrary loans sent or received during that period.

Reference questions – Library staff answered 2,126 reference questions during the first two months of the year. Of these, 91% came from self-represented patrons with the remaining 9% coming from attorneys.

Staff did not track reference statistics during the last 10 months of the year due to constraints from working remotely.



Currently, 12 items are on the missing materials list. This does not include missing books that have been replaced, or outdated items that would have been discarded due to age. No items went missing in 2020. Materials numbers are for the calendar year, but circulation only counts the first two months of the year because of the Library's physical closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Materials Count

Volumes at beginning of year	13,622
Number of volumes added	64
Number of volumes discarded	47
Total approximate volumes	13,639
Number on missing list	12

Circulation

Items checked out	38
Inter-Library Loans received	0
Inter-Library Loans sent	0
Total items circulating	38

Financial Report

Money in the Library's budget comes from its statutory share of filing fees, interest earned, and any funds it is able to generate itself. The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant negative impact on revenues this year. Revenues for 2020 came from the following sources:

A. Passive revenue

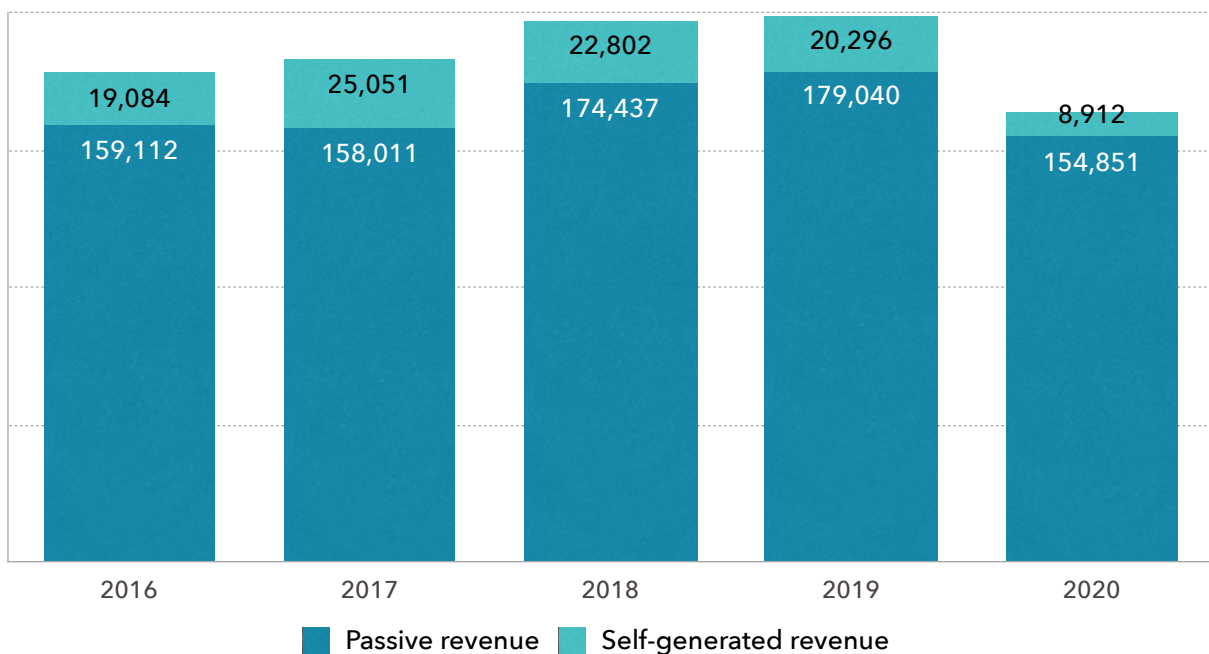
1. Filing fees - \$44,562 from District Court fees (a decrease of 23%), and \$103,257 from Superior Court fees (a decrease of 7.6%).

2. Investment interest - \$7,031 in interest.

B. Self-generated revenues

1. Form kits - \$7,171 in gross revenues from eight different kits (a decrease of 57%).
2. After-hours access keycards - \$900 from attorneys. (This amount was for 2020 access. The board voted to suspend this fee for 2021 since the Library is still physically closed.)
3. Copier/printing - \$422 from the Library's share of copier revenues and printing.
4. Sale of outdated materials - \$259 from the sale of certain materials that were withdrawn from the collection and would have been discarded otherwise. Items are listed for bid to raise a nominal amount of money for the Library.
5. Jail contract - \$160 from the Jail. The Board of Trustees has an agreement with the Clark County Sheriff to provide services to the County Jail to answer questions or inmate kites.

Self-generated revenues total \$8,912, which is 44% of the amount that was raised last year. It represents only 5% of the Library's total revenue. The following chart provides a visual comparison of the two types of revenues:

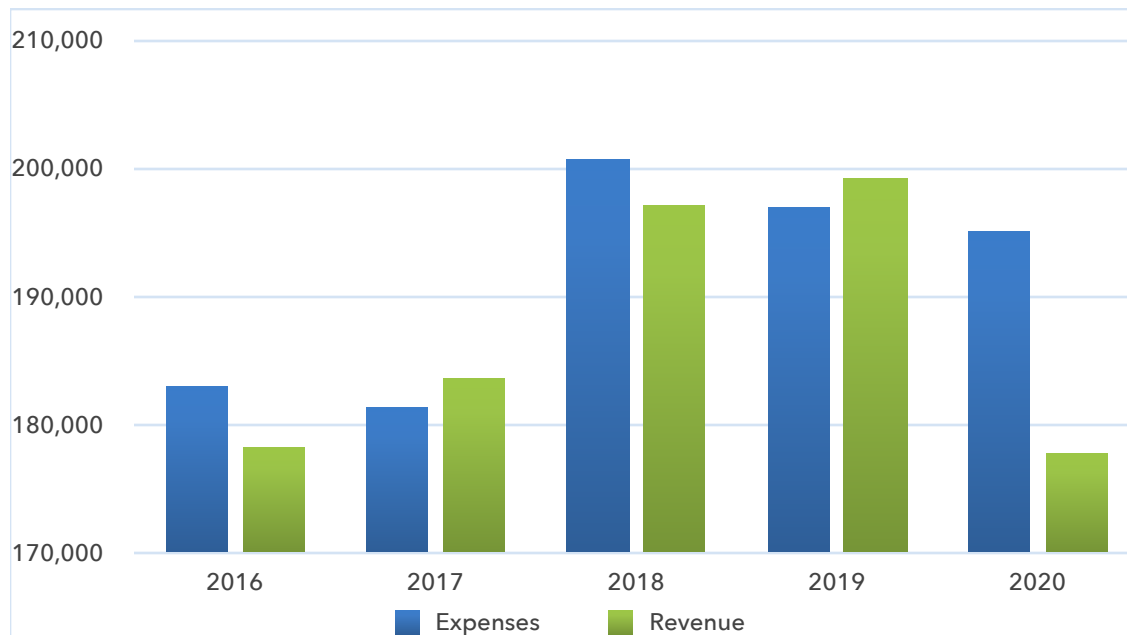


Passive and Self-Generated Income 2016 - 2020

The chart on the next page lists revenues and expenditures by category for 2020. The Law Library ended the year under budget on both. Expenses exceeded revenues in the amount of \$17,243 because of the decrease in revenues due to COVID-19. While the Library was able to lower its expenses to be 93% of budget, its revenues were only 85% of budget.

<u>Revenue</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Percent of budget</u>
District Court filing fees	55,000.00	44,562.00	81%
Superior Court filing fees	113,500.00	103,257.00	91%
Interest	11,000.00	7,031.00	64%
After-hours access keycards	1,044.00	900.00	86%
Form packets (gross)	14,000.00	7,171.00	51%
Jail Law Library services	100.00	160.00	160%
Copier	1,200.00	422.00	35%
Printing/Faxing	600.00	140.00	23%
Misc. (fines, envelopes, resale)	1,000.00	408.00	41%
Donations	0.00	50.00	
County reimbursement for new fees	6,900.00	12,667.00*	184%
Shipping and handling	0.00	1,060.00	
Reserve account	4,600.00	0.00	0%
Income Subtotal	208,944.00	177,828.00	85%
*The amount reimbursed is for both 2019 and 2020			
<u>Expenses</u>			
Salaries	77,662.00	75,854.00	98%
Employee benefits	36,693.00	38,979.00	106%
Books, materials, and databases	81,613.00	72,829.00	89%
Office supplies and printing	200.00	60.00	86%
Printing	1,500.00	344.00	23%
Temporary employment	1,000.00	0.00	0%
Telephone	300.00	179.00	60%
Travel/parking	1,680.00	660.00	39%
Computer (ER&R)	4,896.00	4,896.00	100%
Equipment maintenance/repair	500.00	0.00	0%
Dues and memberships	400.00	350.00	88%
Tuition and registration	2,000.00	0.00	0%
Furniture	500.00	0.00	0%
Postage	0.00	480.00	
COVID-19 supplies	0.00	440.00	
Expenses Subtotal	208,944.00	195,071.00	93%

The following bar graph compares the Library's total revenue with total expenses over the last five years:



Revenue and Expenses for 2016-2020

Summary

Law Library staff will continue to work remotely until they have been vaccinated against COVID-19. At that point the Library expects to reopen with limitations due to social distancing. Staff will continue to look for ways to better serve patrons remotely.

Submitted on behalf of the Board of Trustees by:

Meridee E Pabst

Meridee E Pabst (May 6, 2021 11:11 PDT)

Meridee Pabst, Co-Chair

Date

Rachel Brooks

Rachel Brooks, Co-Chair

Date








Library Annual Report

Final Audit Report

2021-05-06

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